



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (PUBLIC AFFAIRS)

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## STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE HAROLD BROWN

I am announcing today a major technological advance of great military significance.

This so-called "stealth" technology enables the United States to build manned and unmanned aircraft that cannot be successfully intercepted with existing air defense systems. We have demonstrated to our satisfaction that the technology works.

This achievement will be a formidable instrument of peace. It promises to add a unique dimension to our tactical forces and the deterrent strength of our strategic forces. At the same time it will provide us capabilities that are wholly consistent with our pursuit of verifiable arms control agreements, in particular, with the provisions of SALT II.

For three years, we have successfully maintained the security of this program. This is because of the conscientious efforts of the relatively few people in the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch who were briefed on the activity and of the contractors working on it.

However, in the last few months, the circle of people knowledgeable about the program has widened, partly because of the increased size of the effort, and partly because of the debate underway in the Congress on new bomber proposals. Regrettably, there have been several leaks about the stealth program in the last few days in the press and television news coverage.

In the face of these leaks, I believe that it is not appropriate or credible for us to deny the existence of this program. And it is now important to correct some of the leaked information that misrepresented the Administration's position on a new bomber program. The so-called stealth bomber was not a factor in our decision in 1977 to cancel the B-1; indeed, it was not yet in design.

I am gratified that, as yet, none of the most sensitive and significant classified information about the characteristics of this program has been disclosed. An important objective of the announcement today is to make clear the kinds of information that we intend scrupulously to protect at the highest security level. Dr. Perry, my Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering and a chief architect of this program will elaborate on this point further.

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In sum, we have developed a new technology of extraordinary military significance. We are vigorously applying this technology to develop a number of military aircraft and these programs are showing very great promise.

We can take tremendous pride in this latest achievement of American technology. It can play a major role in strengthening our strategic and tactical forces without in any way endangering any of our arms control initiatives. And it can contribute to the maintenance of peace by posing a new and significant offset to the Soviet Union's attempt to gain military ascendancy by weight of numbers.

I would now like to ask Bill Perry to give you some additional details on our stealth program.

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